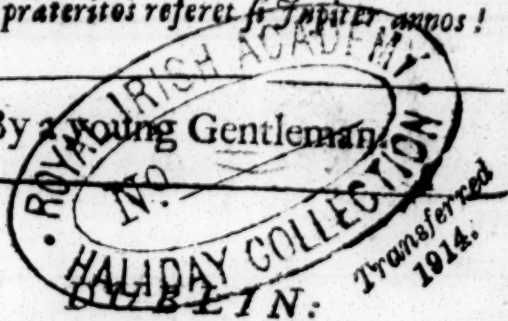


THE
Sincere Penitent :
A
DIALOGUE
Between
Philotheus and Philocosmus.

O mihi praeſentis referet ſc. Jupiter annos !

By a Young Gentleman.



Printed for *William Norman* Bookſeller, and are to be ſold at his Shop in *Dames-ſtreet*, 1699.

Philotheus



TO THE
READER.

THE following Treatise was
the real Result of my
Soul, and my sincere Thoughts
digested into Method ; I chose
the way of Dialogue, as being
the most pleasing to the Reader,
for men should be entic'd to their
Duty by all lawful means : I
have Publish'd it on no other
score but hoping it may do some

A 2

Good,

To the Reader.

Good, and if you read it as Seriously as I Wrote it, I hope I shall not fail of my Wish'd Expectation: For if the World reaps any Benefit by my poor Endeavours, the whole aim I propos'd is answer'd to your

trual Friend, and Well-wisher,

To

Epistle Dedicatory.

To the Right Honourable
WILLIAM Lord Vis-
count *MOUNTJOY*.

My Lord,

MY Obligations to Your Lord-
ship are many, and great,
and this Poor Return is all
I have to offer: Gratitude obliges me
to acknowledge my Debts, that it may
appear I have (at least) the Will, if
it should ever be in my Power to make
any Restitution. In the mean time
this is the way those who appear in
Print take of Paying their Debts, and
I my Lord, being as great a Bankrupt
as others, follow their Method. The
following Papers which I Dedicate to
Your Lordships Protection would be

Epistle Dedicatory.

rather an Affront, than an Acknowledgement, were not Your Lordship's real Value for Religion sufficiently known to all: Your Family has been Famous, tho' Unfortunate in the Bravest of Quarrels, where your Religion, your Laws and Country stood in need of Your Assistance. Go on (Great Sir) and may Your Glories and Honours increase till I should wish the Growing Flood to ebb, which shall not be till the sum of Your Bliss and Glory be compleat in an Eternal and Happy World. The consummation of which, shall ever be the Prayer of

My Lord, your Lordship's

Most obliged

Humble Servant.

Philothheus.

T H E

Sincere Penitent.

Philocosmus. WELL met my dear *Philotheus* : It is almost an Age since last I saw you, and now you're so strangely alter'd, that at first, I scarcely knew you : What's the occasion of this change ? where's all that Gayety and Mirth which us'd to dwell upon your pleasant Brow ? Where's the alluring Mein ? The taking Smiles ? Where the Fine Dress ? And all the other Winning Arts with which you gain'd the Ladies good esteem ? Sure some strange misfortune has befallen you, which has occasion'd this unexpected metamorphosis.

Philotheus, No *Philocosme*, The best, the greatest, chiefest Happiness, Heaven can bestow, or man enjoy, is the reason of what you call a metamorphosis.

Philocosf.

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Philocos. And is it thus you thank kind Heaven for the Blessing? For shame, cast off those melancholly looks, assume your wonted Jollity, and let us to the Tavern, and there over a chearful Bottle give the Gods thanks for their Favours.

Philotha. Softly *Philocosme*, and I'll shew you, how much you are mistaken in both points, for neither am I melancholly, nor is a Tavern, and a Bottle fit returns to Heaven for his mercies: What, because I am not mad, must I therefore be melancholly? Will you allow no *medium*? Because my Dress is not true Beaux, my Gate affected, my Talk and Laughter loud, and extravagant, must I therefore be melancholly? You're very Hetrodox in your Opinion, for it is the Sober, Vertuous Man, who is the truly chearful, and merry man, his Happiness is real, his Joys are perfect, whilst the Airy, Lewd, Debauchee (whom the World calls the man of Wit, and Pleasures) who knows how to use the Blessings of this Life, willfully studies how to make himself uncapable of relishing any Happiness. He makes that

very punishment which the Hollanders inflict on Criminals, and is call'd the Dutch Beverage, his chief delight, tho' crop-sick next morning he curses the last night's debauch, damns the Company who Revel'd with him, and for a day or two condemns himself to Penitential Small-Beer. And is this the way to live happily? I would sooner be damn'd to linger out my wretched life, chain'd to an Oar on board a Spanish Galley.

Philocof. And yet *Philotheus*, this was the verry life you led for some years, nay you were one of the Topping Extravagants, and strove with eagerness to Out-do your lazy Comrades. You were the Chiefest Champion for it, curs'd all Morals, and the Plodding Fools who taught them first, call'd all a Trick, a meer Design of old, envious Dotards, who being by Age and Impotence depriv'd of the possibility of enjoyment, would needs impose those merciless Curbs on the High-mettled Youth.

Philoth. Oh! 'tis too true.

Philocof. Why that Sigh?

Phi-

Philothe. It is a tribute justly paid to the remembrance of my former Follies. But Oh! my friend, could I recall those mispent hours, and live those days again, nor Thought, nor Word, nor Deed should e're offend my Great and Merciful Creator. But they are fled, fled far beyond my power to reach; but yet sincere Contrition, and Heav'n's mercy will atone for all.

Philocos. You're melancholly mad, and I will bid you farewell; I shall (it may be) in a day or two see you peeping thro' a Grate in *Bethlehem*.

Philothe. Stay: I will not let you go; I love my Friend too well, than tamely suffer him to run blindly on his Ruine thus. You shall hear me, and if you will but hear me impartially, laying aside all prejudice, I'me confident I'll make a Convert of you. 'Tis a gross Error *Philocosme* to call the sober part of Mankind Hypochondriacks, for they are so far from it, that they follow the Apostles Rule, and serve their God with Chearfulness

ness, they thankfully enjoy the Blessings of this World, and are not more glad when they receive the Gifts, than pleas'd when gratefully they return Heaven their Heartiest Praises for them : They delight in doing good, which is their duty, and find themselves as quiet and as easy after the performance, as a Bankrupt who has been a long while tormented how to pay his Debts, is pleased when he at last compounds them. They enjoy a happy and a silent peace within their quiet breasts, verifying that of the Prophet : *Her ways, are ways of pleasantness ; and her paths are peace.* No rude, and loud allarms of a clamorous and troublesome Conscience disturb their rest, or rack their Souls. In the morning they rise with a sedate and quiet mind, their bodies and their Souls keeping a blest Harmony, are both alike in Heavenly temper. The Sober man is free from sad Reflections, how he spent the Yesterday ; nor is he troubled tacitely to question himself : Have I any Quarrel on my hands ? Did I fall out with any one last night ? And in
punctilio,

punctilio, am to Fight this morning? And when he cannot recollect himself, (the Fumes of the Entoxicating Wine having hindred the exercise of his Memory) he's forc'd to ask his Foot-man Questions: *Tom*, How parted we last night? Who was there all in Company? Had we no Words, &c. Now, for Heaven's sake, granting there were no such thing as Religion, or a future World, Is not this a most Unhappy Life? A base condescension to take your Servant's Word, and trust your very Darling Honour in your Foot-man's hands. Such a manner of life Un-mans men, Debases those of the highest Quality, to the meanest and vilest Abjects. A Heathen could say *Nobilitas sola est atque unica Virtus*. And shall a Christian, who has the hopes and prospect of a Heaven hereafter, added as a Reward for his living well, shall he be out-strip'd by a Heathen, in the Race of Vertue? I believe, my Friend, you durst (were your Country, King, or Liberties at Stake) rush boldly midst the Thundring War, Fight Valiantly under
your

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your Prince's Banner for the preservation of those Dear Pledges, and by your Daring, shun the hated name of Coward; Why will you then prove less Valiant under a more Glorious Banner? Why not as brave a Soldier in a Holy War, where the Prizes are much more Ualuable? Eternal Bliss, is the Conquering Heroe's great Reward, but Everlasting Wo the just Punishment of the Coward and Traytor.

Those I have mention'd are some few of the many Inconveniencies which attend the Dear Delights of keeping (what you call) good Company. But since my Design is only to awaken you; I shall no longer insist on this Head, believing I have already painted that Vice in its Lively colours: I desire now to know if still you think a Tavern and a Bottle, fit Returns to Indulgent Heaven for the dispensation of his Mercies?

Philocos. No: my *Philotheus* thou hast awakened me, thou hast dealt with me as a Skillful Surgeon do's with a Timorous Patient;

Patient ; with wary caution you have search'd my Wound, and heal'd it without hurting me : You took not those violent courses, which instead of Reforming, harden men the more. But I had almost forgot, Pray what's that mighty Happiness you have so lately met with ? Is it some Rich Relation newly dead, and left you a plentiful Estate ?

Philothe. No : But my Sins are dead, and left my Soul in peace. A sense of my past Follies hath awaken'd me, and a sincere Resolution for the future to live a sober and a vertuous life, a stedfast and I hope a lasting Repentance, is the Happiness I have receiv'd, and what I reckon the greatest Blessing could have befall'n me.

Philocos. Tell me *Philotheus*, what it was that rous'd you, and how this change was wrought ?

Philothe. Frequent, and Wonderful Deliverances from Eminent Dangers, flar-
tled

tled me at first, which shockt my Resolution of pursuing the Allurements of this World, and made me consider what I ow'd to God, and look upon each Mercy, as a Call to mend my life.

Philocos. Well, you have indeed obtained your Design upon me, as to that of Drinking, I am, and own my self your Convert. But what say you Friend? Will not you allow me a little innocent freedom with a Pretty Girl? Or grant at least, that the Sin is Venial?

Philothe. All Innocent Freedoms are lawful, but I fear by your mentioning a Venial Sin, you mean Fornication, it so avoid it as you would the Plague, or any worse Disease; there's Deadly Poyson in't. You must not be almost, but altogether a Christian: Men may sooth themselves with Fancies, but sure no Sin without sincere Repentance, will be pardon'd, and I do not know any one Crime against which God's Vengeance is more, and frequenter Denounced than this: The Scriptures

tures are full of Woes against the Adulterers and Whoremongers ; and foreseeing that this Sin wou'd be the Chiefest Allurement with which the Devil can tempt man, has taken all necessary care to forewarn and arm us against it : *The Whoremongers and Adulterers God will judge, and again, They shall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven* : No Unclean thing shall get admittance into the Cœlestial Habitations, and can any thing be more filthy, or unclean than a Whoremonger ? And besides the Terrible Judgements denounc'd in the Scriptures against those who commit the Sin of Uncleaness, it has seem'd good to the Divine Wisdom and Justice to inflict a very Severe and Dreadful Punishment even in this Life, which tho' it do's not always light upon the Guilty breaker of the Seventh Command, yet it commonly overtakes the Hardned Sinner, How many Wretched Examples have we seen of miserable people who infected with the Venereal Plague, have linger'd out a miserable Life here in Dismal Agonies, and Fearful Torments, and without the
parti-

particular mercy of an Indulgent Creator, and the Earnest mediation of a Powerful Advocate, must also Howl Eternally in another World for the Satisfaction of Justice and Expiation of the Sin. What Mischiefs has Lust been the Author and Contriver of? How many Murthers have been committed on this score? How many States and Kingdoms entirely Ruin'd by nothing but Unbridled Lust? From hence has sprung Incests, Parricide and a Train of Woes, which are the constant Attenders of that Sin. The Silly *Indians* who Barter Gold and Jewels for Glass and Beads, make much a better Bargain, than he who forfeits Eternity for a Moment's Pleasure. Sure nothing but the greatest Stupidity imaginable could be guilty of so gross a Folly? *What shall a man profit, if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?* It is strange, that men who are so wise and crafty in their Dealings here, so Politick in the Trifling things of this Transitory World, should be such Fools in the great Business of their Souls. It's enough to break a true Christians heart, to see with

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how

how much Impudence this Sin is acted; he's not reckon'd a true Gentleman who has not been Flux'd once, et least, and its a requisite Point of Breeding to understand how to Cure Venereal Distempers, the Gentle way of Speaking is thro' the Nose, and our Beauxs brag more of those Wounds they basely got in *Venus* Wars, than if they had Nobly got them in the Field of Honour, for their Country's sake. Pimping and Pandarism are the ways to the best Preferments, where Vertue ought to lead the way: But it is as *Juvenal* says,

*Aude aliquid brevibus Gyris, vel carcere
utimur,
Sive esse iugis, probitas laudatur, & alget.*

I must own indeed that this Vice is the greatest Temptation the Devil has in his power, the sharpest Weapon he can use against us, therefore we ought to be the more cautious of our selves, and strive more earnestly against it, by the Power of the Spirit subdue the Lusts of the Flesh,
be-

behave our selves like Valiant Soldiers in this our Warfare with the World, and like the Noble Christian Youth, who in the Decian Persecution, by the Witty Malice of his Pagan Enemies, was tyed with Cords of Silk upon a Bed of Down, plac'd in a curious Garden, where no Alluring Prospects were wanting, which could heighten, or entice Desires, then a Fair Strumpet trick'd up with all her Wanton Arts, came to draw the Vigorous Youth unto her loose Embraces ; but he bravely resisted her Attempts, till at the last, finding by her Arts his Blood began to warm, and his Flesh to threaten a Rebellion, he resolutely bit off his Tongue, and spate it in the Harlot's face : Choosing to go into Paradise wanting a Tongue, than having one to be cast into Hell-Fire. The Chastity of those primitive Times of Christianity, is very Remarkable : Those Women who were for their Religion condemn'd to be Prostituted, beg'd no other Favour of their cruel Judges, but that their Verrue being safe, they might be expos'd to the Fury of Re-venous Lyons.

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Philosof. They were brave Heroiens, I fear there are few of that soft Sex of this Age, would follow their great Example.

Philothe. Their Shame's the greater ; Yet there are some brave Christian Ladies still, who would joyfully run into the Cold Arms of Death (let him appear in all his Dreadful Forms) rather than yield to the Foul Embraces of an Unlawful Love. The number of these Vertuous Women would increase, if all that Sex did but consider the Dangers and miseries which attend the crime, but most of them [as the Sex is rash and inconsiderate in all they do] are hurried away by the first Impulse of their Inclinations ; and without ever thinking, obey the whisperings of the Tempter, never call up their Reason, or their Vertue to their aid, but yield themselves an easy Prey to Sin and Shame. But the Men who Tempt them, have the greatest Guilt ; they do the Devil's Drudgery for him, and use all means and ways their Wit can invent, or their Lusts suggest to them ; they spare

no Oaths, nor Vows, but Invoke Heaven confidently to be a Witness to their Lewdness. Perjury follows, for a Lover looks upon it to be a base thing, if he should keep his Oath. Nay, this is so very common, that the use is crept into a Proverb, and when you would name a Trifle, you bring in the *Simile*: *As frail as Lovers Vows.*

Philocof. I wonder that Young-women do not take Warning by the Examples of others, and that the Noted Fallhood of Mankind do's not make them altogether Incredulous.

Philothe. There are a thousand little things happen in a Love Intreigue, which cannot be exprest, which make the Conquest easier; but some of the chief Reasons of the fond Credulity of Women, I take to be these. First their Pride (of which, every She has her share) which makes them think better of themselves, than others. and belive their Charms are more prevailing, and lasting, and if they have

have any Instance of a Forsaken *Phyllis* in their mind, they'l urge, it may be, to their Amorous Gallant, and tell him with a Languishing Sigh, *After enjoyment you will grow cold and careleß, and forsake me so.* The Lover then has recourse to his Oaths : which Prodiggally he pours forth, and wishes all the Horrible Execrations Hell's Malice can invent, may fall upon his Perjur'd Head, if e're he prove Unconstant, or Unkind : A glittering present is added as confirmation to his Vows; the Simple Girl believes all, takes him for a Man of Honour, or at least so far thinks him a Christian, that he would not venture Damnation by breaking all those Oaths : But she never considers that he who breaks one Command, will keep none ; he that Whores, will Swear, nay, Forswear too ; and if once the Devil makes you fond of one beloved Sin, the breach of all God's Laws will quickly follow, the first Unfortunate Disobedience ; Thus the poor Girl believes, consents, and thus at last is ruin'd.

Philocol.

Philosof. I know not what to say, Nature and Youth plead strongly for it. It is none of those Sins which grow upon us by custom and habit, but rather an innate Propensity which encrease with our Years, and seems to be as much requir'd by Nature, as Eating or Drinking.

Philothe. Oh Friend, I find it is your Darling Sin, and I must root it from your Brest, or you are lost. Those are stale Arguments you use, to wheedle your self into Destruction, and besides your Position is wrong, for no Vice encreases more by custom and habit than this does. You seem tacitely to imply, that it is a Command which cannot be kept: Sure you won't make a Tyrant of your God? And think that the Infinite Goodness, whose beloved Attribute is Mercy, should impose any Laws impossible to be kept upon Mankind. You never strove against the Sin, but on the contrary, have employ'd the Strength of your Fancy to heighten your supposed Bliss; and when like Daring *Ixion*, you embrac'd a Cloud
have

have thought you had your Goddess, in your arms.

Believe me what I say, and try my Re-
cepe, you'l gain a happy and a total Con-
quest ; it is no Frozen Hermit who speaks
to you, warm, youthful Blood beats live-
ly in my full swoln Veins ; you cannot
say the Sin left me, before I threw it off :
Consider seriously with your self, and du-
ly weigh what certain Dangers you incur
and all for a Trifle ; by just Reflections
on the Folly, bring your self into a loath-
ing of the Vice. Positively believe, that
unavoidable Damnation dos attend, and
then your Reason will soon determine you,
how vast the disproportion is, between
fleeting and imaginary Pleasures, and end-
less and unspeakable Joys. Besides it is
the most unaccountable piece of Avarice,
to covet the whole Sex : The Law of God
and Man allows every man one, and if
that man will be but contented (nay,
rather believe himself so, for happy he
really is.) The Mighty Ottoman is not
so Blest, with all his Numerous Train of
Beau-

Beauties, in his Great *Seraglio*. There True Love, and a Pretty Off-spring Bless the Obedient Husband ; each rolling day adds new Comforts to his Happy Life, and having enough, he covets no more. But you perhaps will say, What Generous Soul would be confin'd to the Dull Clog of Matrimony ? Subject to the constant Impertinencies of a Wife : And yet you submit to the Illegal Tyranny of a Strumpet, like a man of a Factious Temper, won't obey your Lawful Prince, but tamely be Impos'd upon by an Usurper.

Philocos. I yield, and own, I'm to my satisfaction vanquisht, and yet am Conqueror, tho' overcome.

Philothe. There is one Vice more which is in great Repute with the Gentlemen of the World : A Vice that is in it self so very Rediculous, that nothing but its being forbid, could e're have made the World to find it out, and as the Apostle says, *He had never known Sin, but by the Law* : So it may be asserted, Swearing had

had never been in such Esteem, had not there been a Prohibition of it.

Gens Humana ruit per vetitum nefas.

This is a Sin which has neither Profit nor Pleasure in it ; in all other Crimes, the Devil makes use of some Bait to cover his Hook, but here he uses man as an Angler does Gudgeons, catch them with a naked Hook, knowing their Folly, he thinks them not worth the Cost and Trouble of a Bait. Certainly none but Idiots and Naturals (one would think) could be guilty of this Vice, and yet we see men, in other things of tollerable parts, who have good Education strangely besotted with this Sin, and can hardly speak but they must lard their Sentences, and tag their Discourses with an Oath or two. I shall not longer dwell upon a Subject so unworthy, nor trouble my self any farther to expose a Vice, which has no Plea for it self ; But shall next tell you, I cou'd wish that Gaming were either quite left off, or at least limited ; For tho' I cannot say it

is either *malum in se*, or *malum prohibitum*, yet it has frequently very Dismal Consequences; many Estates are Ruin'd, whole Families reduc'd, even to Beggery; several Murthers committed on this score, and Gaming always did, and whilst its countenanc'd, always will, maintain a parcel of Sharping Rooks, who if depriv'd of this shelter, might be Serviceable to the Publick.

There are other Vices which not less than those are mention'd, deserve a severe Censure, but they are Sins of such a Nature, that our Gentry do not only shun them, but are much ashamed, if in an Age. A man who has had a Liberal Education, should be found a Delinquent; such are Theft, Lying, Back-biting, and the like. And besides, none pretend to Justify these Crimes; they have no Advocates, but are allow'd by all to be Sins. Since then, the Men of Quality and Rank blush at these Crimes, In the Name of God, let them consider, and be as much ashamed of their other Vices, for they
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are neer ally'd, and either the one, or the other Rank of them, makes them alike the Devils Slaves; and if they drag his Chains, it is no matter how they put them on.

Philosof. Enough, my Dear Deliverer; I am convinced, and will reform, I will henceforth shake off those Cursed Fetters which have Wranckled my poor Soul: Thou hast made me sensible of a Burthen which sits heavy on me now, tho' I before felt not its dangerous Weight.

Philothe. You must get rid of it my Friend, and speedily, least the Load depress the mounting of your Sublimer Thoughts,

Philosof. I will; if Prayers and Tears Offended Heaven can move, if a sincere Contrition can atone and expiate my Crimes.

Philothe. Heaven is all Goodness, and never yet shut up his Bowels of Compassion

sion to the Truly Penitent : Read the Scriptures carefully, where you will find all the Comfort you can hope for. No Father e're us'd his First-born with more Tenderness, than Heaven dos the returning Sinner. Christ Invites him to come unto him, with all the Endearing Expressions a Heavenly Love can use : Nay, tells you, that all the Heavenly Choire rejoyce at a Sinner's Conversion ; and the Holy Angels are Interess'd in your Happy Change. And as Dispair is the most accursed state which any Miserable Wretch can fall into, so the Sacred Writ has taken a peculiar tender care, that man should avoid that dismal condition : And has not only by Exhortations invited the Sinner to Repent, that he may be Forgiven, but has also given us several Instances of Notorious Sinners who have by their repentance become very Dear to God. It was the Penitence of *David* which obtain'd him the Holy Writ's Testimony, that he was a *Man after God's own heart*. *Mary Magdalen*, from a Vile Sinner, became a happy Saint. And Persecuting *Saul*, a Preaching

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Preaching *Paul* ; and suffer'd a Glorious Martyrdom, as a Witness for the Truth of that very Faith which he before had so Zealously Persecuted. Our Blessed Saviour Pray'd for his Persecutors ; which Glorious Example, his Martyrs afterwards followed, saying, *O Lord, lay not this Sin to their charge.* And doubtless, as many of them as repented, were forgiven. Nay, if *Judas* himself, who betrayed his Lord and Master, had received the Grace of Repentance, he would have found also the benefit of a Pardon : If he had acted like *St. Peter* [who after he had denied his Master] went immediately out and wept. The mercy of Indulgent Heaven to the Sincerely Penitent is a Theme of that vast extent, that it would take a longer time than our present Opportunity can admit of, to handle every Particular : And I presume I have already said enough, to make you hope for Pardon, and believe that your sincere Contrition will meet with Heaven's assisting Grace to forward you in the great Work of your Salvation.

Philocof. Your Words are full of Comfort ; you have brought back my Wandering Reason to my aid ; you have snatcht me from the gaping Jaws of a near and threatening Destruction, and plac'd me on a Hill of Safety, furnishing me with Weapons fit for my defence.

Philothe. Make use of them, and you shall overcome : Your Foe is no Brave Enemy ; if you press briskly forward, he soon will flee before your bold Attempts ; for he only pursues the Coward and Dastard : This is a Warfare in which every Resolute man is sure of Victory, and of the Glorious Rewards which attend his Conquest.

Speak ; Are you resolv'd ?

Philocof. I am : But e're I enter the Lists, as a Soldier of Christ's, I'll lay down the Accoutrements of my former General. Now therefore farewell : A lasting farewell to the World, and all the empty Pleasures with which so long I was enslav'd. Methinks I now am free, like
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some poor Wretch who long has led a slavish Life in *Tunis*, or *Algiers*, and when about to be Redeemed, Triumphantly he shakes his long drag'd Chains, and leaps with Transport from the ground,

Philothe. Trust me, I rejoyce to see you man again ; before, you only had the Human shape, for the distinguishing Soul was lost.

Philocos. It was : But Thanks to Heaven, and thee, tis found again.

Adieu all Vanities, all Lusts adieu :
Heav'n, thou'rt my aim, my only hope's
(in you)



F I N I S.